

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5268

As of January 24, 2007

Title: An act relating to requiring reviews and revisions of the essential academic learning requirements.

Brief Description: Requiring reviews and revisions of the essential academic learning requirements.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Prentice, Fairley, Oemig, Kline, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Tom, Regala, Brandland, Rockefeller, Rasmussen and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/24/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 1993, the Legislature directed the Commission on Student Learning (Commission) to develop the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), which describe what students should know and be able to do in eight content areas: reading, writing, communication, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and health and fitness. The EALRs in reading, writing, communications, and mathematics were initially adopted in 1995 and revised in 1997. The EALRs for science, social studies, the arts, and health and fitness were initially adopted in 1996 and also revised in 1997. The Commission also established performance benchmarks in all the content areas at three grade levels: grades 4, 7, and 10. The Commission completed its work in 1999 and was dissolved.

In 2002, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) began development of Grade Level Expectations (GLE) for grades kindergarten through 10. Current law requires the SPI to periodically review the EALRs.

Summary of Bill: A review and revision cycle for the EALRs is established, with reporting requirements.

Beginning in 2007, and every 10 years after that, the SPI must review, and revise, as necessary, the EALRs. The review must include a review of the cultural relevancy of the EALRs and whether the EALRs continue to promote the goals of the Basic Education Act and reflect the knowledge and skills needed by students. The cultural relevancy review must include feedback from specified stakeholders.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

SPI must report the findings of the review to the State Board of Education, the Legislature, and the Governor. The first report is due December 1, 2008.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: When the EALRs were originally created, we didn't really address cultural relevancy. Measurement of what we are doing is important and the review of cultural relevancy is critical. When the standards are not culturally relevant, it pushes students out. We have such a rich array of cultures within the state and that should be reflected in the EALRs. Some of the current EALRs are not culturally sensitive. There are better representatives for the tribes than the Governor's office of Indian Affairs or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to consult. The stakeholders who are consulted should have more authority than just input. Since 2000, OSPI has had bias and fairness panels to review the EALRs and provide input. Some feel that the input of these panels have been given no weight.

OTHER: The grade level expectations should be added to the review because the EALRs are very broad and cover all the grades, but the grade level expectations are specific to each grade. The GLEs are where the cultural relevance would be found. OSPI currently periodically reviews the EALRs – some of them on a shorter timeline than 10 years. It would be reasonable to provide some flexibility in the timeline to enable that to continue to occur.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Ryan Spiller, Washington Health Foundation; Suzi Wright, Tulalip Tribes.

OTHER: Mickey Lahmann, OSPI.